9th. *Battle of Laon. Retreat towards Soissons.*

10th, Chavignon:

(To King Joseph.) The army I defeated at Craonne was the Russian army commanded by Sacken, with that of Wintzingerode. They lost heavily and retired to Laon, where they joined the corps of Billow, of York, and of Kleist, of the Prussian army. As their position at Laon was very strong, I confined myself yesterday to reconnoitring it. The Duke of Ragusa, who was marching on Laon from Berry-au-bac, got near to the city, his soldiers lost their heads, and he had to retire in some disorder for several leagues, abandoning a few of his guns. This is only an incident of warfare, but a very unfortunate one to occur at a moment when I needed a little luck. This event had made me decide not to attack to-day.

llth. I have decided to fall back on Soissons. The Young Guard is melting away like snow. The Old Guard keeps up. The cavalry of the Guard also melts away fast.

12th, Soissons:

(To the Prince of Neuchatel.) Write to the Duke of Ragusa that I have no idea of what his corps represents at this moment.

(To King Joseph.) I regret to see that you have spoken to my wife about the Bourbons, and the difficulties the Emperor of Austria might raise. I must beg you to avoid such conversations. I do not wish to be protected by my wife. Such an idea would spoil her and lead to a quarrel. What is the good of talking to her that way ? Never, in four years, have the words Bourbon or Austria issued from my lips. In any case, all this can only trouble her sleep and spoil her excellent temper.